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1 June 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : NIS Delinquencies

FROM : E. Drexel Godfrey, Jr.

1. I have examined the delays in OCI's production of NIS sections. As expected, I found that every dereliction was in some way unique: a small misstep at the start of a lengthy process expanded itself geometrically by the finish; or, the transfer of an NIS writer to a current intelligence crisis created a gap in the momentum of producing a General Survey never made up, etc.

2. It is easy to observe that if deadlines in current production were missed to the same degree as those in the NIS program, there would be no OCI. But such an observation ignores the essential fact that writing NIS sections is not producing current intelligence and vice versa. It is in great part because the analyst feels little sense of urgency in his NIS assignment, much less of relevancy, that he is unperturbed when schedules start slipping. And, depending on how close he is to the analyst, the supervisor, who almost always is oriented to current intelligence, tends to feel pretty much the same way. Most analysts assigned NIS sections discover that their work is not research either. It is collation, cut and paste according to set outlines. Sometimes new statistics have to be hunted up, but that is work any librarian can do. The reaction of current intelligence analysts to the real nature of NIS work is in two words: not good.

3. What can management do in this situation? First, it can do the obvious: assemble the NIS apparatus-- particularly that part of it with the poorest record-- and jack it up once again in the effort to maintain schedules despite the aridness of the assignment. That will have some effect, at least for a few months. Second, management can appeal to the NIS committee for an easing of the schedule in cases of valid analytical difficulty. There seldom are such cases, however. Analytical difficulty usually translates to mean ineptitude and/or sheer boredom with the process.

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4. Assigning inept analysts to the NIS is quite clearly a failure of the supervisor, not the employee. But assigning an office newcomer to do an NIS section is something else again. The new analyst may have come aboard with a high reputation; an NIS section theoretically should constitute a good first test of this reputation. If, however, the neophyte's reputation is undeserved or misplaced, the timetable of his NIS section may be in deep trouble. By the time the supervisor satisfies himself that the analyst has had a fair chance but is not the man for the task, it is already too late. Picking up the pieces and starting over again with another writer will get the job done, but almost surely it will get done quite late. One lesson suggests itself from all this: NIS sections should not be assigned to newcomers for training purposes.

5. Overcoming boredom with and distaste for the NIS process is quite another matter. The OCI supervisor knows that it is in this area that most of the lags in the schedule set in. I am not confident that there is a solution for this problem given the process as it now exists, the outlines as they now exist, and the final product itself. To overcome the disinterest in the NIS on the part at least of the OCI producers, we may have to turn to new systems, new ways of doing things.

6. Any drastic revamping of the NIS would require the support of the Pentagon. This we are not likely to get. What we can do is radically revise OCI's approach to the job. One proposal (which would fly directly in the teeth of the previous recommendation to avoid using NIS assignments for training purposes) would be to make preparation of a General Survey the subject of an Agency internship--a six months' internship.

7. Certain safeguards would be required before such a system could come into effect. First, the participants would have to be hand-picked by OCI; on-campus recruitment of graduate students in regional studies should be instituted (much as OER had done for years). Second, the candidates would have to be paid relatively handsome stipends: \$5,000 for a six months' (or two quarters) stint?* Third, the candidates would

*In the Annex there is a rough statement of costs for OCI's participation in the NIS during the present fiscal year. These figures are by no means precise, but they give a general indication of cost using manpower on board.

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have to demonstrate in advance an ability to write cogently and to organize lengthy pieces of expository writing. Fourth, OCI would have to maintain a stable of resource people to assist these young graduate students, to monitor their progress, to edit their drafts, etc. Finally, it should be noted that some NIS obligations simply could not be done in this manner—for example, the section 57's and the General Surveys on the larger, more complex countries.

8. There are some risks in this approach, but there are also potential gains unrelated to alleviating the NIS burden. For example, one cannot be certain that every young graduate student recruited is going to cut the mustard—any more than is every new CT. What does the Agency do with the candidate who early in his six months' stint shows that he is not going to be able to finish the Survey on which he is working? I think the Directorate has to be prepared to cope. We must locate and earmark donkeywork that needs to be done until the man's six-month contract is completed. If washouts occur once in a while, some benefits can also come along. For example, brief exposure to the Agency even in such mundane work as the NIS could easily result in a number of long-term recruitments. A program of limited Agency exposure to the NIS interns might be laid on. One cautionary note: graduate students should be recruited for money. They should not be shilled into expecting great intellectual adventures. This is a job that has to be done, period.

9. Another possible solution to the NIS burden would start from an entirely different assumption about the nature of the task. The graduate-student-on-hire approach assumes that good grounding in country or regional studies would provide sufficient expertise for writing a general survey. The other tack would be the recruitment of mature editors from within the Agency for rotational stints. The assumption underlying this approach would be that preparation of the NIS demands basically some writing skill and the capacity to organize materials. Doing the General Survey in this fashion, however, would mean that, since editors without country expertise would be involved, the writers would have to work closely with their counterpart OCI desk officers. This approach has another advantage. It would make it possible for such a person to change his job style for the six months necessary to tackle a General Survey. There are scores, possibly hundreds, of editors tucked away in various parts of the Agency,

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masquerading under various job descriptions. Many of them are reported to be bored stiff. But even if they are only slightly restless, why not go for some flexibility of experience?

10. At this stage I would think it would be wise to try a couple of test programs before becoming deeply involved in either the external recruitment approach or the internal rotation approach. Perhaps both systems could be tried at the same time for comparative purposes. Any such test or tests would naturally require the indulgence of OBGI. In other words, OBGI would have to declare itself willing to risk missed timetables for the sake of the experiment--or, in the extraordinary circumstance of a success, OBGI would have to be willing to accept a manuscript ahead of schedule.

11. More radical changes in the NIS structure and process may be necessary in the long run. Changes of this nature would naturally go beyond OCI's jurisdiction; they are included here only as provocative suggestions. Herewith some notions:

a. Secure an outside consulting firm to examine the NIS with a view to determining two things: (1) What elements do its consumers regard as so essential that they must be retained; and (2) How and at what cost can the essential elements be recorded and maintained for Community use by ADP techniques. I suggest the outside consulting firm because I don't feel anyone within the Community can be expected to be objective about the NIS.


b. Reduce the overall NIS burden by eliminating coverage of the major countries on which good, open material is readily available. This would mean, in turn, the conversion of the NIS committee from its present role as scheduling agent into a more substantive body. The committee's work could be expanded into a variety of innovative fields by the use of subcommittees and task forces. It might, for example, meet to make determinations about the countries to be dropped. Demanding even more skill would be the designation of openly available volumes to be included on an acceptable literature list.

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12. Almost all the changes discussed above would result in some loss of function for OCI. Some part of the responsibility for NIS production would remain under any new formula, but in all cases the impact on OCI manpower would be less. I anticipate this would result in pressure for the contraction of OCI's personnel strength. Frankly I see no problem with this. There are a number of officers who should be urged to move on. Reduction in function would provide management with additional persuasive leverage. Such leverage should only be used with lengthy advanced notice and assistance in planning departures.



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E. DREXEL GODFREY, JR.

Attachment: Annex

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